

ISABELLA;

OR, THE

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190

FATAL MARRIAGE.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-S-ROYAL

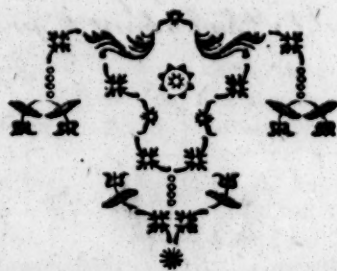
IN

Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

Altered from SOUTHERN.

Pellex ego facta mariti—

OVID.



L O N D O N :

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M DCC LXXIX.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

COUNT BALDWIN, Father to Biron and Carlos.

BIRON, married to Isabella, supposed dead.

CARLOS, his younger Brother.

VILLEROY, in love with Isabella, marries her.

SAMPSON, Porter to Count Baldwin.

A Child of Isabella's, by Biron.

BELLFORD, a Friend of Biron's.

PEDRO, a Friend to Carlos.

W O M E N.

ISABELLA, married to Biron and Villeroi.

Nurse to Biron.

Officers, Servants, Men and Women.

SCENE, BRUSSELS.

ISABELLA.

A C T I.

SCENE, before Count Baldwin's House.

Enter Villeroy and Carlos.

Car. THIS constancy of yours will establish an immortal reputation among the women.

Vil. If it would establish me with Isabella——

Car. Follow her, follow her: Troy town was won at last.

Vil. I have follow'd her these seven years, and now but live in hopes.

Car. But live in hopes! Why, hope is the ready road, the lover's baiting-place; and for aught you know, but one stage short of the possession of your mistress.

Vil. But my hopes, I fear, are more of my own making, than her's; and proceed rather from my wishes, than any encouragement she has given me.

Car. That I can't tell: the sex is very various: there are no certain measures to be prescrib'd or follow'd, in making our approaches to the women. All that we have to do, I think, is to attempt 'em in the weakest part. Prefs them but hard, and they will all fall under the necessity of a surrender at last. That favour comes at once; and sometimes when we least expect it.

Vil. I shall be glad to find it so.

Car. You will find it so. Every place is to be taken, that is not to be reliev'd: she must comply.

Vil. I'm going to visit her.

Car. What interest a brother-in-law can have with her, depend upon.

Vil. I know your interest, and I thank you.

Car. You are prevented—see, the mourner comes: She weeps, as seven years were seven hours; So fresh, unfading, is the memory Of my poor brother's, Biron's, death. I leave you to your opportunity. [*Exit Vil.*]

Tho' I have taken care to root her from our house, I would transplant her into Villeroy's; There is an evil fate that waits upon her, To which I wish him wedded—Only him: His upstart family, with haughty brow, (Tho' Villeroy and myself are seeming friends) Looks down upon our house; his sister too, Whose hand I ask'd, and was with scorn refus'd, Lives in my breast, and fires me to revenge.— They bend this way——

Perhaps, at last, she seeks my father's doors; They shall be shut, and he prepar'd to give The beggar and her brat a cold reception. That boy's an adder in my path—they come; I'll stand apart, and watch their motions. [*Retires.*]

Enter Villeroy, with Isabella and her little Son.

Isa. Why do you follow me? you know I am A bankrupt every way: too far engag'd Ever to make return; I own you've been

More than a brother to me, my friend; And at a time when friends are found no more, A friend to my misfortunes.

Vil. I must be Always your friend.

Isa. I have known, and found you Truly my friend; and would I could be yours; But the unfortunate cannot be friends.

Pray, be gone; Take warning, and be happy.

Vil. Happiness! There's none for me without you. What serve the goods of fortune for! To raise My hopes, that you at last will share them with me.

Isa. I must not hear you. *Vil.* Thus, at this awful distance, I have serv'd A seven years bondage—Do I call it bondage, When I can never wish to be redeem'd!

No, let me rather linger out a life Of expectation that you may be mine, Than be restor'd to the indifference Of seeing you, without this pleasing pain. I've lost myself, and never would be found, But in these arms.

Isa. Oh, I have heard all this!—— But must no more—the charmer is no more: My bury'd husband rises in the face Of my dear boy, and chides me for my stay.— Canst thou forgive me, child?

Child. Why, have you done a fault? You cry as if you had. Indeed now, I've done nothing to offend you: but if you kiss me, and look so very sad upon me, I shall cry too.

Isa. My little angel, no; you must not cry: Sorrow will overtake thy steps too soon; I should not hasten it.

Vil. What can I say! The arguments that make against my hopes Prevail upon my heart, and fix me more: When yet a virgin, free, and undispos'd, I lov'd, but saw you only with my eyes; I could not reach the beauties of your soul: I have since liv'd in contemplation And long experience of your growing goodness: What then was passion, is my judgment now, Thro' all the several changes of your life, Confirm'd and settled in adoring you.

Isa. Nay, then I must be gone. If you're my friend, If you regard my little interest, No more of this; you see, I grant you all That friendship will allow. Be still my friend; That's all I can receive, or have to give. I'm going to my father; he needs not an excuse To use me ill; pray, leave me to the trial.

Vil. I'm only born to be what you would have The creature of your power, and must obey; [me, In every thing obey you. I am going:

But all good fortune go along with you. [Exit.

Ifa. I shall need all your wishes— [Knocks.

Lock'd! and fast!

Where is the charity that us'd to stand,
In our forefathers hospitable days,
At great men's doors, ready for our wants,
Like the good angel of the family,
With open arms taking the needy in,
To feed and clothe, to comfort and relieve 'em?
Now even their gates are shut against their poor.

[She knocks again.

Enter Sampson to her.

Samp. Well, what's to do now, I trow? You knock as loud as if you were invited; and that's more than I heard of: but I can tell you, you may look twice about you for a welcome, in a great man's family, before you find it, unless you bring it along with you.

Ifa. I hope I bring my welcome along with me: Is your lord at home?

Samp. My lord at home!

Ifa. Count Baldwin lives here still?

Samp. Ay, ay, Count Baldwin does live here; and I am his porter: but what's that to the purpose, good woman, of my lord's being at home?

Ifa. Why, don't you know me, friend?

Samp. Not I, not I, mistress; I may have seen you before, or so: but men of employment must forget their acquaintance; especially such as we are never to be the better for.

[Going to shut the door; Nurse enters, having overheard him.

Nurse. Handsomer words would become you, and mend your manners, Sampson: do you know who you prate to?

Ifa. I am glad you know me, Nurse.

Nurse. Marry, Heav'n forbid, Madam, that I should ever forget you, or my little jewel! pray go in—[*Ifabella goes in with her Child.*] Now my blessing go along with you, wherever you go, or whatever you are about.—Fie, Sampson, how could'st thou be such a Saracen? A Turk would have been a better christian, than to have done so barbarously by so good a lady.

Samp. Why look you, Nurse, I know you of old: by your good-will you would have a finger in every body's pye, but mark the end on't; if I am call'd to account about it, I know what I have to say.

Nurse. Marry, come up here! say your pleasure, and spare not. Refuse his eldest son's widow, and poor child, the comfort of seeing him! She does not trouble him so often!

Samp. Not that I am against it, Nurse, but we are but servants, you know: we must have no likings, but our lord's; and must do as we are ordered. But what is the business, Nurse? You have been in the family before I came into the world: what's the reason, pray, that this daughter-in-law, who has so good a report in every body's mouth, is so little set by, by my lord?

Nurse. Why, I tell you, Sampson, more nor less; I'll tell the truth, that's my way, you know, without adding or diminishing.

Samp. Ay, marry, Nurse.

Nurse. My lord's eldest son, Biron by name, the son of his bosom, and the son that he would have lov'd best, if he had as many as King Pyramus of Troy.—This Biron, as I was saying, was a lovely, sweet gentleman, and indeed, nobody could blame his father for loving him: he was a son for the King of Spain; God bless him, for I was his nurse. But now I come to the point, Sampson; this Biron, without asking the advice of his friends, hand over

head, as young men will have their vagaries, not having the fear of his father before his eyes, as may say, wilfully marries this Isabella.

Samp. How, wilfully! he should have had her consent, methinks.

Nurse. No, wilfully marries her; and, which was worse, after she had settled all her fortune upon a nunnery, which she broke out of to run away with him. They say they had the church's forgiveness, but I had rather it had been his father's.

Samp. Why in good truth, and I think our young master was not in the wrong, but in marrying without a portion.

Nurse. That was the quarrel, I believe, Sampson: upon this, my old lord would never see him; disinherited him; took his younger brother, Carlos, into favour, whom he never car'd for before; and at last forc'd Biron to go to the siege of Candy, where he was killed.

Samp. Alack-a-day, poor gentleman.

Nurse. For which my old lord hates her; as if she had been the cause of his going thither.

Samp. Alas, alas, poor lady! she has suffer'd for't: she has liv'd a great while a widow.

Nurse. A great while indeed, for a young woman, Sampson.

Samp. Gad so! here they come; I won't venture to be seen.

Enter Count Baldwin, followed by Isabella and her Child.

C. Bald. Whoever of your friends directed you, Misguided and abus'd you—There's your way; I can afford to shew you out again:

What could you expect from me?

Ifa. Oh, I have nothing to expect on earth! But misery is very apt to talk:

I thought I might be heard.

C. Bald. What can you say?

Is there in eloquence, can there be in words

A recompensing pow'r, a remedy,

A reparation of the injuries,

The great calamities, that you have brought

On me, and mine? You have destroy'd those hopes

I fondly rais'd, through my declining life,

To rest my age upon? and most undone me.

Ifa. I have undone myself too.

C. Bald. Speak it again;

Say still you are undone, and I will hear you, With pleasure hear you.

Ifa. Would my ruin please you?

C. Bald. Beyond all other pleasures.

Ifa. Then you are pleas'd—for I am most undone.

C. Bald. I pray'd but for revenge, and Heav'n has heard,

And sent it to my wishes: these grey hairs Would have gone down in sorrow to the grave, Which you have dug for me, without the thought, The thought of leaving you more wretched here.

Ifa. Indeed, I am most wretched!

I lost with Biron all the joys of life:

But now it's last supporting means are gone;

All the kind helps that Heav'n in pity rais'd,

In charitable pity to our wants,

At last have left us: now bereft of all,

But this last trial of a cruel father,

To save us both from sinking.—Oh, my child!

Kneel with me, knock at nature in his heart:

Let the resemblance of a once-lov'd son

Speak in this little one, who never wrong'd you,

And plead the fatherless and widow's cause.

Oh, if you ever hope to be forgiven,

As you will need to be forgiven too,

Forget our faults, that Heaven may pardon yours.

C. Bald. How dare you mention Heav'n! Call to mind
Your perjur'd vows; your plighted, broken faith
To Heav'n, and all things holy: were you not
Devoted, wedded to a life recluse,
The sacred habit on, profess'd and sworn
A votary for ever? Can you think
The sacrilegious wretch, that robs the shrine,
Is thunder-proof?

Isa. There, there, began my woes.
Oh! had I never seen my Biron's face,
Had he not tempted me, I had not fall'n,
But still continued innocent, and free
Of a bad world, which only he had pow'r
To reconcile, and make me try again.

C. Bald. Your own inconstancy
Reconcil'd you to the world:
He had no hand to bring you back again,
But what you gave him. Circe, you prevail'd
Upon his honest mind, transforming him
From virtue, and himself, into what shapes
You had occasion for; and what he did
Was first inspir'd by you.

Isa. Oh! I have sins to Heav'n, but none to him.

C. Bald. Had my wretched son
Marry'd a beggar's bastard, taken her
Out of her rags, and made her of my blood,
The mischief might have ceas'd, and ended there;
But bringing you into a family,
Entails a curse upon the name and house
That takes you in: the only part of me
That did receive you, perish'd for his crime.
'Tis a defiance to offended Heav'n,
Barely to pity you: Your sins pursue you.

Isa. Not for myself—for I am past the hopes
Of being heard—but for this innocent—
And then I never will disturb you more.

C. Bald. I almost pity the unhappy child:
But being yours—

Isa. Look on him as your son's;
And let his part in him answer for mine.
Oh! save, defend him, save him from the wrongs
That fall upon the poor.

C. Bald. It touches me—
And I will save him; but, to keep him safe,
Never come near him more.

Isa. What take him from me?
No, we must never part: 'tis the last hold
Of comfort I have left; and when he fails,
All goes along with him. Oh!
I live but in my child.

No, let me pray in vain, and beg my bread
From door to door, to feed his daily wants,
Rather than always lose him.

C. Bald. Then have your child, and feed him
with your prayer.—

You, rascal, slave, what do I keep you for?
How came this woman in?

Samp. Why indeed, my lord, I did as good as tell
Her, before, my thoughts upon the matter—

C. Bald. Did you so, Sir? Now, then, tell her mine;
Tell her I sent you to her. [*Thrusts him towards her.*]
There's one more to provide for.

Samp. Good, my lord, what I did was in perfect
obedience to the old Nurse there; I told her what it
would come to.

C. Bald. What! this was a plot upon me. And
you too, beldame, were you in the conspiracy? Be
gone, go all together; take any road but this to beg
or starve in; but never, never see me more—

[*He drives 'em off before him.*]

Isa. Then heav'n have mercy on me!

[*Exit with her Child, followed by Sampson
and Nurse.*]

A C T II.

S C E N E *continues.*

Enter Villeroy and Carlos, meeting.

Vil. MY friend, I fear to ask—but Isabella—
The lovely widow's tears, her orphan's
cries,

Thy father must feel for them—No, I read,
I read their cold reception in thine eyes—
Thou pitiest them—tho' Baldwin—but I spare him
For Carlos' sake; thou art no son of his.
There needs not this to endear thee more to me.

[*Embrace.*]

Car. My Villeroy, the fatherless, the widow,
Are terms not understood within these gates—
You must forgive him, Sir; he thinks this woman
Is Biron's fate, that hurried him to death—
I must not think on't, lest my friendship stagger.
My friend's, my sister's, mutual advantage,
Have reconcil'd my bosom to it's task.

Vil. Advantage! think not I intend to raise
An interest from Isabella's wrongs.

Your father may have interested ends
In her undoing; but my heart has none:
Her happiness must be my interest,
And that I would restore.

Car. Why so I mean.

These hardships that my father lays upon her,
I'm sorry for; and wish I could prevent;
But he will have his way.
Since there's no hope from her prosperity, her
change of fortune may alter the condition of her
thoughts, and make for you.

Vil. She is above her fortune.

Car. Try her again. Women commonly love ac-
cording to the circumstances they are in.

Vil. Common women may.

No, though I live but in the hopes of her,
And languish for th' enjoyment of those hopes;
I'd rather pine in a consuming want
Of what I wish, than have the blessing mine,
From any reason but consenting love.
Oh! let me never have it to remember,
I could betray her coldly to comply.
When a clear gen'rous choice bestows her on me,
I know to value the unequal'd gift:
I would not have it, but to value it.

Car. Take your own way; remember what I of-
fer'd came from a friend,

Vil. I understand it so. I'll serve her for herself,
without the thought of a reward. [*Exit.*]

Car. Agree that point between you. If you mar-
ry her any way, you do my business.

I know him—What his gen'rous soul intends
Ripens my plots—I'll first to Isabella.—

I must keep up appearances with her too. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E, Isabella's House.

*Enter Isabella and Nurse; Isabella's little Son at play
upon the Floor.*

Isa. Sooner, or later, all things pass away,
And are no more. The beggar and the king,
With equal steps, tread forward to their end:
The reconciling grave swallows distinction first, that
made us foes,

Then all alike lie down in peace together.

When will that hour of peace arrive for me!

In heav'n I shall find it—not in heav'n!

If my old tyrant father can dispose

Of things above—but, there, his interest

May be as poor as mine, and want a friend

As much as I do here.

[*Weeping.*]

Nurse. Good Madam, be comforted.

Isa. Do I deserve to be this out-cast wretch?

Abandon'd thus, and lost? But 'tis my lot,
The will of Heav'n, and I must not complain:
I will not for myself; let me bear all
The violence of your wrath! but spare my child:
Let not my sins be visited on him!

They are, they must; a general ruin falls
On every thing about me: thou art lost,
Poor Nurse, by being near me.

Nurse. I can work, or beg, to do you service.

Isa. Could I forget

What I have been, I might the better bear
What I am destin'd to: I'm not the first
That have been wretched: but to think how much
I have been happier!—Wild, hurrying thoughts,
Start every way from my distracted soul,
To find out hope, and only meet despair.

——What answer have I?

Enter Sampson.

Samp. Why truly, very little to the purpose: like
a Jew as he is, he says you have had more already
than the jewels are worth: he wishes you would rather
think of redeeming 'em, than expect any more
money upon 'em. *[Exit Sampson.]*

Isa. 'Tis very well——

So—Poverty at home, and debts abroad!
My present fortune bad; my hopes yet worse!
What will become of me!

This ring is all I have left of value now:
'Twas given me by my husband; his first gift
Upon our marriage. I've always kept it,
With my best care, the treasure next my life:
And now but part with it to support life,
Which only can be dearer.—Take it, Nurse,
'Twill stop the cries of hunger for a time.

Take care of it:
Manage it as the last remaining friend
That would relieve us: *[Exit Nurse.]* Heav'n can
only tell

Where we shall find another—My dear boy!
The labour of his birth was lighter to me
Than of my fondness now; my fears for him
Are more, than in that hour of hovering death,
They could be for myself—He minds me not.
His little sports have taken up his thoughts:
Oh, may they never feel the pangs of mine!
Thinking will make me mad: why must I think,
When no thought brings me comfort!

Nurse returns.

Nurse. Oh, Madam! you are utterly ruin'd and
undone; your creditors of all kinds are come in
upon you: they have muster'd up a regiment of
rogues, that are come to plunder your house, and
seize upon all you have in the world; they are be-
low! What will you do, Madam?

Isa. Do! nothing; no, for I am born to suffer.

Enter Carlos to her.

Car. Oh, sister! can I call you by that name,
And be the son of this inhuman man,
Inveterate to your ruin? Do not think
I am akin to his barbarity:
I must abhor my father's usage of you;
And from my bleeding, honest heart, must pity,
Pity your lost condition. Can you think
Of any way that I may serve you in?
But what enrages most my sense of grief,
My sorrow for your wrongs, is, that my father,
Fore-knowing well the storm that was to fall,
Has order'd me not to appear for you.

Isa. I thank your pity; my poor husband fell
For disobeying him, do not you stay
To venture his displeasure too for me.

Car. You must resolve on something— *[Exit.]*

Isa. Let my fate

Determine for me; I shall be prepar'd,
The worst that can befall me, is to die. *[A noise.]*
Hark, they are coming; let the torrent roar;
It can but overwhelm me in it's fall;
And life and death are now alike to me.

[Exeunt, the Nurse leading the Child.]
SCENE opens, and shows Carlos and Villeroi
with the Officers.

Vil. No farther violence——

The debt in all is but four thousand crowns:
Were it ten times the sum, I think you know
My fortune very well can answer it.

You have my word for this: I'll see you paid.

Off. That's as much as we can desire: so we have
the money, no matter whence it comes.

Vil. To-morrow you shall have it.

Car. Thus far all's well——

Enter Isabella, and Nurse with the Child.
And now my sister comes to crown the work.

Isa. Where are the raving blood-hounds, that
In a full cry, gaping to swallow me? *[Aside.]*
I meet your rage, and come to be devour'd:

Say, which way are you to dispose of me!

To dungeons, darkness, death!

Car. Have patience.

Isa. Patience!

Off. You'll excuse us, we are but in our office:
Debts must be paid.

Isa. My death will pay you all. *[Distractedly.]*

Off. While there is law to be had, people will
have their own.

Vil. 'Tis very fit they should; but pray be gone.
To-morrow certainly—— *[Exeunt Officers.]*

Isa. What of to-morrow?

Must I be reserv'd
For fresh afflictions?

Vil. For long happiness
Of life, I hope.

Isa. There is no hope for me.

The load grows light, when we resolve to bear:
I'm ready for my trial.

Car. Pray, be calm,
And know your friends.

Isa. My friends! Have I a friend?

Car. A faithful friend; in your extremest need,
Villeroi came in to save you——

Isa. Save me! How?

Car. By satisfying all your creditors.

Isa. Which way? For what?

Vil. Let me be understood,
And then condemn me: you have given me leave
To be your friend; and in that only name,
I now appear before you. I could wish
There had been no occasion of a friend,
Because I know you hate to be oblig'd;
And still more loath to be oblig'd by me.

Isa. 'Twas that I would avoid—— *[Aside.]*

Vil. I'm most unhappy, that my services
Can be suspected to design upon you;
I have no farther ends than to redeem you
From fortune's wrongs; to shew myself at last,
What I have long profess'd to be, your friend:
Allow me that; and to convince you more,
That I intend only your interest,
Forgive what I have done, and in amends
(If that can make you any, that can please you)
I'll tear myself for ever from my hopes,
Stifle this flaming passion in my soul,
And mention my unlucky love no more.

Isa. This generosity will ruin me. *[Aside.]*

Vil. Nay, if the blessing of my looking on you
Disturbs your peace, I will do all I can

To keep away, and never see you more.

Car. You must not go.

Vil. Could Isabella speak

Those few short words, I should be rooted here,
And never move but upon her commands.

Car. Speak to him, sister; do not throw away
A fortune that invites you to be happy.

In your extremity he begs your love;

And has deserv'd it nobly. Think upon

Your lost condition, helpless and alone.

Tho' now you have a friend, the time must come

That you will want one; him you may secure

To be a friend, a father, a husband to you.

Isa. A husband!

Car. You have discharg'd your duty to the dead,

And to the living; 'tis a wilfulness

Not to give way to your necessities,

That force you to this marriage.

Nurse. What must become of this poor innocent?

[To the Child.]

Car. He wants a father to protect his youth,

And rear him up to virtue: You must bear

The future blame, and answer to the world,

When you refuse the easy, honest means,

Of taking care of him.

Nor would I press you—

Isa. Do not think I need

Your reasons, to confirm my gratitude—

I have a soul that's truly sensible

Of your great worth, and busy to contrive, [To Vil.]

If possible, to make you a return.

Vil. Oh, easily possible!

Isa. It cannot be your way: my pleasures are

Bury'd and cold in my dead husband's grave;

And I should wrong the truth, myself, and you,

To say that I can ever love again.

I owe this declaration to myself:

But as a proof that I owe all to you,

If after what I've said, you can resolve

To think me worth your love—Where am I going?

You cannot think it; 'tis impossible.

Vil. Impossible!

Isa. You should not ask me now, nor should I grant;

I am so much oblig'd, that to consent,

Wou'd want a name to recommend the gift:

'Twould shew me poor, indebted, and compell'd,

Designing, mercenary; and I know

You would not wish to think I could be bought.

Vil. Be bought! Where is the price that can pre-

To bargain for you? Not in fortune's power. [tend

The joys of Heav'n, and love, must be bestow'd:

They are not to be sold, and cannot be deserv'd.

Isa. Some other time I'll hear you on this subject.

Vil. Nay, then there is no time so fit for me.

[Following her.]

Since you consent to hear me, hear me now;

That you may grant: you are above

The little forms which circumscribe your sex;

We differ but in time, let that be mine.

Isa. You think fit

To get the better of me, and you shall;

Since you will have it so—I will be yours.

Vil. I take you at your word.

Isa. I give you all

My hand; and would I had a heart to give:

But if it ever can return again,

'Tis wholly yours.

Vil. Oh, extasy of joy!

Leave that to me. If all my services,

If all that man can fondly say or do,

Can beget love, love shall be born again.—

Oh, Carlos! now my friend and brother too—

And, Nurse, I have eternal thanks for thee.

Send for the priest—

[Nurse goes out in haste]

This night you must be mine.

Let me command in this, and all my life

Shall be devoted to you.

Isa. On your word,

Never to press me to put off these weeds,

Which best become my melancholy thoughts,

You shall command me.

Vil. Witness, Heaven and earth

Against my soul, when I do any thing

To give you a disquiet.

Car. I long to wish you joy.

Vil. You'll be a witness of my happiness?

Car. For once I'll be my sister's father,

And give her to you.

Vil. Next my Isabella,

Be near my heart: I am for ever yours. [Exeunt.]



A C T III.

S C E N E, Count Baldwin's House.

Enter Count Baldwin and Carlos.

C. Bald. MARRIED to Villeroy, say'st thou?

Car. Yes, my lord.

Last night the priest perform'd his holy office,

And made 'em one.

C. Bald. Misfortune join 'em!

And may her violated vows pull down

A lasting curse, a constancy of sorrow

On both their heads—

Car. Soon he'll hate her;

Tho' warm and violent in his raptures now;

When full enjoyment palls his sicken'd sense,

And reason with satiety returns,

Her cold, constrain'd acceptance of his hand,

Will gall his pride, which (tho' of late o'erpower'd

By stronger passions) will, as they grow weak,

Rise in full force, and pour it's vengeance on her.

C. Bald. Now, Carlos, take example to thy aid;

Let Biron's disobedience, and the curse

He took into his bosom, prove a warning,

A monitor to thee, to keep thy duty

Firm and unshaken.

Car. May those rankling wounds

Which Biron's disobedience gave my father,

Be heal'd by me.

C. Bald. With tears I thank thee, Carlos—

And may'st thou ever feel those inward joys,

Thy duty gives thy father—but, my son,

We must not let resentment choak our justice;

'Tis fit that Villeroy know he has no claim

From me, in right of Isabella—Biron,

(Whose name brings tears) when wedded to this wo-

By me abandon'd, sunk the little fortune [man,

His uncle left, in vanity and fondness:

I am possess'd of those your brother's papers,

Which now are Villeroy's, and shou'd aught remain,

In justice it is his; from me to him

You shall convey them—follow me, and take 'em.

[Exit Count Baldwin.]

Car. Yes, I will take 'em; but e'er I part with

I will be sure my interest will not suffer [em,

By these his high, refin'd, fantastic notions

Of equity and right—What a paradox

Is man! My father here, who boasts his honour,

And e'en but now was warm in praise of justice,

Can steel his heart against the widow's tears,

And infant's wants; the widow and the infant

Of Biron; of his son, his fav'rite son.

'Tis ever thus weak minds, who court opinion,

And, dead to virtuous feeling, hide their wants

In pompous affectation—Now to Villeroy—
Ere this his friends, for he is much belov'd,
Croud to his house, and with their nuptial songs
Awake the wedded pair: I'll join the throng;
And in my face, at least, bear joy and friendship.

[Exit.]

SCENE, a Hall in Villeroy's House. A Band of
Music, with the Friends of Villeroy.

Enter a Servant.

1st Fr. Where's your master, my good friend?

Serv. Within, Sir,

Preparing for the welcome of his friends.

1st Fr. Acquaint him we are here: yet stay,
The voice of music gently shall surprise him,
And breathe our salutations to his ear.
Strike up the strain to Villeroy's happiness,
To Isabella's—But he's here already.

Enter Villeroy.

Vil. My friends, let me embrace you:
Welcome all—

What means this preparation? [Seeing the music.]

1st Fr. A slight token

Of our best wishes for your growing happiness—

You must permit our friendship—

Vil. You oblige me—

1st Fr. But your lovely bride,
That wonder of her sex, she must appear.
And add new brightness to this happy morning.

Vil. She is not yet prepar'd; and let her will,
My worthiest friend, determine her behaviour;
To win, and not to force her disposition,
Has been my seven years task. She will anon
Speak welcome to you all. The music stays.

[Villeroy and his friends seat themselves.]

EPITHALAMIUM.

A I R.

Woman. Let all, let all be gay,
Begin the rapt'rous lay;
Let mirth, let mirth and joy,
Each happy hour employ,
Of this fair bridal day.

Man. Ye love-wing'd hours, your flight,
Your downy flight prepare,
Bring ev'ry soft delight
To sooth the brave and fair.

Hail, happy pair! thus in each other blest;
Be ever free from care, of ev'ry joy possest.

Vil. I thank you for this proof of your affection:
I am so much transported with the thoughts
Of what I am, I know not what I do.
My Isabella!—but possessing her,
Who would not lose himself?—You'll pardon me—
Oh! there was nothing wanting to my soul,
But the kind wishes of my loving friends—
Where's Carlos now?
Methinks I am but half myself without him.

2d Fr. This is wonderful! Married a night and
a day, and yet in raptures.

Vil. Oh! when you all get wives, and such as
(If such another woman can be found) [mine,
You will rave too, doat on the dear content,
And prattle in their praise out of all bounds.

Enter Isabella.

My Isabella! Oh, the joy of my heart,
That I have leave at last to call you mine!
But let me look upon you, view you well.
This is a welcome gallantry indeed!
I durst not ask, but it was kind to grant,
Just at this time: dispensing with your dress
Upon this second day to greet our friends.

Isa. Black might be ominous;
I would not bring ill luck along with me.

Vil. Oh! if your melancholy thoughts could
change

With shifting of your dress—Time has done cures
Incredible this way, and may again.

Isa. I could have wish'd, if you had thought it fit
Our marriage had not been so public.

Vil. Do not you grudge me my excess of love;
That was a cause it could not be conceal'd;
Besides, 'twould injure the opinion
I have of my good fortune, having you;
And I shen it in other people's thoughts.

Isa. I have no more to say.

Enter Carlos.

Vil. My Carlos too, who came in to the support
Of our bad fortune, has an honest right,
In better times, to share the good with us.

Car. I come to claim that right, to share your joy;
To wish you joy; and find it in myself.

[Music finishes.]

Vil. I see you mean a second entertainment.

My dearest Isabella, you must hear
The rapture of my friends; from thee they spring;
Thy virtues have diffus'd themselves around,
And made them all as happy as myself.

Isa. I feel their favours with a grateful heart,
And willingly comply.

RECITATIVE.

Take the gifts the gods intend ye;
Grateful meet the proffer'd joy;
Truth and honour shall attend ye;
Charms that ne'er can change or cloy.

DUETTO.

Man. Oh, the raptures of possessing,
Taking beauty to thy arms!

Woman. Oh the joy, the lasting blessing,
When with virtue beauty charms!

Man. Purer flames shall gently warm ye;

Woman. Love and honour both shall charm thee.

Both. Oh the raptures of, &c. &c.

CHORUS.

Far from hence be care and strife,
Far the pang that tortures life:
May the cincting minutes prove
One sweet round of peace and love!

Car. 'Tis fine, indeed!
You'll take my advice another time, sister.

Vil. What have you done? A rising smile
Stole from her thoughts, just redd'ning on her cheek,
And you have dash'd it.

Car. I am sorry for't.

Vil. My friends, will you forgive me, when I own,
I must prefer her peace to all the world?
Come, Isabella, let us lead the way:
Within we'll speak our welcome to our friends,
And crown the happy festival with joy. [Exeunt.]

SCENE, a Room.

Enter Sampson and Nurse.

Samp. Ay, marry, Nurse, here's a master in-
deed! He'll double our wages for us! If he comes
on as fast with my lady, as he does with his ser-
vants, we are all in the way to be well pleased.

Nurse. He's in a rare humour; if she be in as
good a one—

Samp. If she be, marry, we may e'en say, they
have begot it upon one another.

Nurse. Well; why don't you go back again to
your old count? You thought your throat cut, I
warrant you, to be turn'd out of a nobleman's
service.

Samp. For the future, I will never serve in a
house where the master or mistress of it lie single:
they are out of humour with every body when they
are not pleased themselves. Now, this matrimony

makes every thing go well. There's mirth and money stirring about, when those matters go as they should do.

Nurse. Indeed, this matrimony, Sampson—

Samp. Ah, Nurse! this matrimony is a very good thing—but, what, now my lady is married, I hope we shall have company come to the house: there's something always coming from one gentleman or other upon those occasions, if my lady loves company. This feasting looks well, Nurse.

Nurse. Odo, my master! we must not be seen.

[Exit.]

Enter Villeroi with a Letter, and Isabella.

Vil. I must away this moment—see his letter, sign'd by himself: alas! he could no more; My brother's desperate, and cannot die in peace, but in my arms.

Isa. So suddenly!

Vil. Suddenly taken, on the road to Brussels, To do us honour, love; unfortunate! Thus to be torn from thee, and all those charms, Tho' cold to me, and dead.

Isa. I'm sorry for the cause.

Vil. Oh! could I think, Could I persuade myself that your concern For me, or for my absence, were the spring, The fountain of these melancholy thoughts, My heart would dance, spite of the sad occasion, And be a gay companion in my journey; But—

Enter Carlos from Supper.

My good Carlos, why have you left my friends?

Car. They are departed home.

They saw some sudden melancholy news Had stolen the lively colour from your cheek— You had withdrawn; the bride, alarm'd, had follow'd: Mere ceremony had been constraint; and this Good-natur'd rudeness—

Vil. Was the more obliging.

There, Carlos, is the cause. [Gives the letter.]

Car. Unlucky accident!

Th' Archbishop of Malines, your worthy brother— With him to-night! Sister, will you permit it?

Vil. It must be so.

Isa. You hear it must be so.

Vil. Oh, that it must!

Car. To leave your bride so soon!

Vil. But having the possession of my love, I am the better able to support

My absence, in the hopes of my return.

Car. Your stay will be but short?

Vil. It will seem long!

The longer that my Isabella sighs:

I shall be jealous of this rival grief.

It takes so full possession of thy heart,

Enter Servant, and bows.

My horses wait: farewell, my love! You, Carlos,

Will act a brother's part, till I return,

And be the guardian here. All, all I have

That's dear to me, I give up to your care.

Car. And I receive her as a friend and brother.

Vil. Nay, stir not, love; for the night-air is cold,

And the dews fall—Here be our end of parting;

Carlos will see me to my horse. [Exit with Carlos.]

Isa. Oh, may thy brother better all thy hopes!

Adieu. [Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE, the Street.

Enter Biron and Belford, just arrived.

Bir. THE longest day will have an end; we are got home at last.

Bel. We have got our legs at liberty; and liberty is home, where'er we go; though mine lies most in England.

Bir. Pray let me call this yours: for what I can command in Brussels, you shall find your own. I have a father here, who, perhaps, after seven years absence, and costing him nothing in my travels, may be glad to see me. You know my story— How does my disguise become me?

Bel. Just as you would have it; 'tis natural, and will conceal you.

Bir. To-morrow you shall be sure to find me here, as early as you please. This is the house; you have observ'd the street.

Bel. I warrant you; I han't many visits to make, before I come to you.

Bir. To-night I have some affairs that will oblige me to be private.

Bel. A good bed is the privatest affair that I desire to be engaged in to-night; your directions will carry me to my lodgings. [Exit.]

Bir. Good night, my friend. [Knocks.]

The long expected moment is arriv'd! And if all here is well, my past sorrows Will only heighten my excess of joy; And nothing will remain to wish or hope for!

[Knocks again.]

Enter Sampson.

Sam. Who's there? What would you have?

Bir. Is your lady at home, friend?

Samp. Why, truly friend, it is my employment to answer impertinent questions: but for my lady's being at home, or no, that's just as my lady pleases.

Bir. But how shall I know whether it pleases her or no?

Samp. Why, if you'll take my word for it, you may carry your errand back again: she never pleases to see any body at this time of night, that she does not know; and by your dress and appearance, I am sure you must be a stranger to her.

Bir. But I have business; and you don't know how that may please her.

Samp. Nay, if you have business, she is the best judge whether your business will please her or no: therefore I will proceed in my office, and know of my lady, whether or no she is pleas'd to be at home, or no— [Going.]

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Who's that you are so busy withal? Methinks you might have found out an answer in fewer words: but, Sampson, you love to hear yourself prate sometimes, as well as your betters, that I must say for you. Let me come to him. Who would you speak with, stranger?

Bir. With you, mistress, if you could help me to speak to your lady.

Nurse. Yes, Sir, I can help you in a civil way: but can nobody do your business but my lady?

Bir. Not so well; but if you carry her this ring, she'll know my business better.

Nurse. There's no love-letter in it, I hope: you look like a civil gentleman. In an honest way, I may bring you an answer. [Exit.]

Bir. My old Nurse, only a little older! Yet there's something in these servants' folly pleases me: the cautious conduct of the family appears, and speaks in their impertinence. Well, mistress—

Nurse returns.

Nurse. I have deliver'd your ring, Sir; pray Heav'n you bring no bad news along with you.

Bir. Quite contrary, I hope.

Nurse. Nay, I hope so too; but my lady was very much surpris'd when I gave it her. Sir, I am but

a servant, as a body may say; but if you'll walk in, that I may shut the doors, for we keep very orderly hours, I can shew you into the parlour, and help you to an answer, perhaps as soon as those that are wiser.

Bir. I'll follow you—

Now all my spirits hurry to my heart,
And every sense has taken the alarm
At this approaching interview!

Heav'n's! how I tremble! [*Exit into the house.*]

SCENE, a Chamber.

Enter Isabella.

Isa. I've heard of witches, magic spells, and charms.
That have made nature start from her old course:
The sun has been eclips'd, the moon drawn down
From her career, still paler, and subdu'd
To the abuses of this under world!
Now I believe all possible. This ring,
This little ring, with necromantic force,
Has rais'd the ghost of pleasure to my fears:
Conjur'd the sense of honour, and of love,
Into such shapes, they fright me from myself!
I dare not think of them—

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Madam, the gentleman's below.

Isa. I had forgot; pray, let me speak with him.
[*Exit Nurse.*]

This ring was the first present of my love
To Piron, my first husband: I must blush
To think I have a second. Biron dy'd
(Still to my loss) at Candy; there's my hope.
Oh, do I live to hope that he dy'd there!
It must be so, he's dead, and this ring left
By his last breath, to some known faithful friend,
To bring me back again;

[*Biron introduced; Nurse retires.*]

That's all I have to trust to—
My fears were woman's—I have view'd him all:
And let me, let me say it to myself,
I live again, and rise but from his tomb.

Bir. Have you forgot me quite?

Isa. Forgot you!

Bir. Then farewell my disguise, and my misfortune.
My Isabella! [*tunes.*]

[*He goes to her; she shrieks, and falls in a swoon.*]

Isa. Ha!

Bir. Oh! come again:

Thy Biron summons thee to life and love;
Thy once-lov'd, ever-loving husband calls—
Thy Biron speaks to thee.

Isa. My husband! Biron?

Bir. Excess of love and joy, for my return,
Has overpower'd her—I was to blame,
To take thy sex's softness unprepar'd:
But sinking thus, thus dying in my arms,
This extasy has made my welcome more
Than words could say: words may be counterfeit,
False coin'd, and current only from the tongue,
Without the mind; but passion's in the soul,
And always speaks the heart.

Isa. Where have I been? Why do you keep him from me?

I know his voice: my life upon the wing,
Hears the soft lure that brings me back again;
'Tis he himself, my Biron, the dear man!
My true-lov'd husband! Do I hold you fast,
Never to part again?

If I must fall, death's welcome in these arms.

Bir. Live ever in these arms.

Isa. But pardon me,

Excuse the wild disorder of my soul:
The joy, the strange surprising joy of seeing you,
Of seeing you again, distracted me—

Bir. Thou everlasting goodness!

Isa. Answer me:

What hand of Providence has brought you back
To your own home again? O, satisfy
Th' impatience of my heart: I long to know
The story of your sufferings. But tell me all,
For every thought confounds me.

Bir. My best life! at leisure, all.

Isa. We thought you dead; kill'd at the siege of

Bir. There I fell among the dead; [*Candy,*]
But hopes of life reviving from my wounds,
I was preserv'd, but to be made a slave:
I often writ to my hard father, but never had
An answer; I writ to thee too—

Isa. What a world of woe

Had been prevented, but in hearing from you!

Bir. Alas! thou couldst not help me.

Isa. You do not know how much I could ha' done;
At least, I'm sure I could have suffer'd all:
I would have sold myself to slavery,
Without redemption; giv'n up my child,
The dearest part of me, to basest wants—

Bir. My little boy!

Isa. My life, but to have heard
You were alive—which now too late I find. [*Aside.*]

Bir. No more, my love, complaining of the past,
We lose the present joy. 'Tis over price
Of all my pains, that thus we meet again—
I have a thousand things to say to thee—

Isa. Would I were past the hearing. [*Aside.*]

Bir. How does my child, my boy, my father too?
I hear he's living still.

Isa. Well both, both well;

And may he prove a father to your hopes,
Though we have found him none.

Bir. Come, no more tears.

Isa. Seven long-years of sorrow for your loss,
Have mourn'd with me—

Bir. And all my days behind—

Shall be employ'd in a kind recompence
For thy afflictions.—Can't I see my boy?

Isa. He's gone to bed; I'll have him brought to
you.

Bir. To-morrow I shall see him; I want rest
Myself, after my weary pilgrimage.

Isa. Alas! what shall I get for you?

Bir. Nothing but rest, my love! To-night I would
Be known, if possible, to your family: [*not*]
I see my Nurse is with you; her welcome
Would be tedious at this time;
To-morrow will do better.

Isa. I'll dispose of her, and order every thing
As you would have it. [*Exit.*]

Bir. Grant me but life, good Heav'n, and give
the means

To make this wond'rous goodness some amends:
And let me then forget her, if I can!
O! she deserves of me much more, than I
Can lose for her, though I again cou'd venture
A father, and his fortune, for her love!
You wretched fathers, blind as fortune all!
Not to perceive that such a woman's worth
Weights down the portions you provide your sons.
What is your trash, what all your heaps of gold,
Compar'd to this, my heart-felt happiness!

[*Bursts into tears.*]

What has she, in my absence, undergone?
I must not think of that; it drives me back
Upon myself, the fated cause of all.

Isabella returns.

Isa. I have obey'd your pleasure;
Every thing is ready for you.

Bir. I can want nothing here; possessing thee,

All my desires are carry'd to their aim
Of happiness; there's no room for a wish,
But to continue still this blessing to me.
I know the way, my love.

Isa. Shall I attend you?

Bir. By no means;

I've been so long a slave to others pride,
To learn, at least, to wait upon myself;
You'll make haste after——

[*Goes in.*]

Isa. I'll but say my prayers, and follow you——
My prayers! no, I must never pray again.
Prayers have their blessings to reward our hopes,
But I have nothing left to hope for more.
What Heav'n could give, I have enjoy'd; but now
The baneful planet rises on my fate,
And what's to come, is a long line of woe.
Yet I may shorten it——

I promis'd him to follow——him!

Is he without a name? Biron, my husband,
To follow him to bed——my husband! ha!
What then is Villeroy? But yesterday
That very bed receiv'd him for it's lord.
Oh, Biron, hadst thou come but one day sooner,
I would have follow'd thee through beggary,
Through all the chances of this weary life:
Wander'd the many ways of wretchedness
With thee, to find a hospitable grave;
For that's the only bed that's left me now——

[*Weeping.*]

What's to be done—for something must be done.
Two husbands! yet not one! By both enjoy'd,
And yet a wife to neither! Hold, my brain——
Ha! a lucky thought

Works the right way to rid me of 'em all;
All the reproaches, infamies, and scorn,
That every tongue and finger will find for me.
Let the just horror of my apprehensions
But keep me warm——no matter what can come.
'Tis but a blow——yet I will see him first——
Have a last look to heighten my despair,
And then to rest for ever——

Biron meets her.

Bir. Despair and rest for ever! Isabella!
These words are far from thy condition;
And be they ever so. I heard thy voice,
And could not bear thy absence: come, my love!
You have staid long, there's nothing, nothing sure
Now to despair of in succeeding fate.

Isa. I am contented to be miserable,
But not this way: I've been too long abus'd,
And can believe no more.

Let me sleep on to be deceiv'd no more.

Bir. Look up, my love, I never did deceive thee,
Nor ever can; believe thyself, thy eyes
That first inform'd, and lit me to my love;
Those stars, that still must guide me to my joys.

Isa. And me to my undoing. I look round,
And find no path, but leading to the grave.

Bir. I cannot understand thee.

Isa. If marriages
Are made in heav'n, they should be happier:
Why was I made this wretch?

Bir. Has marriage made thee wretched?

Isa. Miserable, beyond the reach of comfort.

Bir. Do I live to hear thee say so?

Isa. Why! what did I say?

Bir. That I have made thee miserable.

Isa. No; you are my only earthly happiness;
And my false tongue believ'd my honest heart,
If it said otherwise.

Bir. And yet you said,
Your marriage made you miserable.

Isa. I know not what I said:

I've said too much, unless I could speak all.

Bir. Thy words are wild; my eyes, my ears, my
heart,

Were all so full of thee, so much employ'd
In wonder of thy charms, I could not find it;
Now I perceive it plain——

Isa. You'll tell nobody——

[*Distraughtly.*]

Bir. Thou art not well.

Isa. Indeed I am not; I knew that before;
But where's the remedy?

Bir. Rest will relieve thy cares: come, come,
I'll banish sorrow from thee. [no more;

Isa. Banish first the cause.

Bir. Heav'n knows how willingly.

Isa. You are the only cause.

Bir. Am I the cause, the cause of thy misfor-
tunes?

Isa. The fatal, innocent cause of all my woes.

Bir. Is this my welcome home! This the reward
Of all my miseries, long labours, pains,
And pining wants of wretched slavery,
Which I have out-liv'd, only in hopes of thee?
Am I thus paid at last for deathless love!

And call'd the cause of thy misfortunes now!

Isa. Enquire no more; 'twill be explain'd too
soon. [She's going off.

Bir. What! Canst thou leave me too?

[He stays her.]

Isa. Pray let me go:

For both our sakes, permit me——

Bir. Rack me not with imaginations
Of things impossible——Thou canst not mean
What thou hast said——Yet something she must mean.
—'Twas madness all——Compose thyself, my love!
The fit is past; all may be well again:
Let us to bed.

Isa. To bed! You've rais'd the storm

Will sever us for ever: Oh, Biron!

On my knees,

(The last time I shall care to be believ'd)

I beg you, beg to think me innocent.

Clear of all crimes, that thus can banish me

From this world's comforts, in my losing you.

Since we must part——

Bir. Nothing shall ever part us.

Isa. Oh! there's a fatal story to be told;

Be deaf to that, as Heav'n has been to me!

When thou shalt hear how much thou hast been
wrong'd,

How wilt thou curse thy fond, believing heart,

Tear me from the warm bosom of thy love,

And throw me, like a poisonous weed, away.

Can I bear this from thee?

No, all things have their end.

When I am dead, forgive and pity me. [Exit.

Bir. Stay, my Isabella——

What can she mean? These doubtings will distract
Some hidden mischief soon will burst to light; [me:
I cannot bear it——I must be satisfied——

'Tis she, my wife, must clear this darkness to me.

She shall——if the sad tale at last must come;

She is my fate, and best can speak my doom. [Exit.



A C T V.

Enter Biron, Nurse following him.

Bir. I know enough: the important question
Of life or death, fearful to be resolv'd,
Is clear'd to me: I see where it must end;

And need enquire no more—Pray, let me have Pen, ink, and paper; I must write awhile, And then I'll try to rest—to rest for ever!

[Exit Nurse.]

Poor Isabella! Now I know the cause, The cause of thy distress, and cannot wonder That it has turn'd thy brain. If I look back Upon thy loss, it will distract me too. Oh, any curse but this might be remov'd! But 'twas the rancorous malignity Of all ill stars combin'd, of heav'n and fate— Hold, hold my impious tongue—Alas! I rave: Why do I tax the stars, or heav'n, or fate? They are all innocent of driving us Into despair; they have not urg'd my doom; My father and my brother are my fates, That drive me to my ruin. They knew well I was alive. Too well they knew how dear My Isabella—Oh, my wife no more! How dear her love was to me—Yet they stood, With a malicious silent joy, stood by, And saw her give up all my happiness, The treasure of her beauty, to another. Oh, cruel father! and unnatural brother! I have but to accuse you of my wrongs, And then to fall forgotten—Sleep or death Sits heavy on me, and benumbs my pains; Either is welcome; but the hand of death Works always sure, and best can close my eyes.

[Exit Biron.]

Enter Nurse and Sampson.

Nurse. Here's strange things towards, Sampson: what will be the end of 'em, do you think?

Samp. Nay, marry, Nurse, I can't see so far; but the law, I believe, is on Biron, the first husband's side.

Nurse. Yes; no question, he has the law on his side.

Samp. For I have heard, the law says, a woman must be a widow, at least seven years, before she can marry again according to law.

Nurse. Ay, so it does; and our lady has not been a widow altogether seven years.

Samp. Why then, Nurse, mark my words, and say I told you so; the man must have his wife again, and all will do well.

Nurse. But if our master Villeroy comes back again—

Samp. Why, if he does, he is not the first man that has had his wife taken from him.

Nurse. For fear of the worst, will you go to the old count, desire him to come as soon as he can; there may be mischief, and he is able to prevent it.

Samp. Now you say something; now I take you, Nurse; that will do well, indeed: mischief should be prevented; a little thing will make a quarrel, when there's a woman in the way. I'll about it instantly. [Exeunt.]

SCENE *draws, shows Biron asleep on a Couch.*
Enter Isabella.

Isa. Asleep so soon! Oh, happy! happy thou, Who thus can sleep! I never shall sleep more— If then to sleep be to be happy, he Who sleeps the longest, is the happiest; Death is the longest sleep—Oh, have a care! Mischiefs will thrive apace. Never wake more.

[To Biron.]

If thou didst ever love thy Isabella,
To-morrow must be doomday to thy peace.
—The sight of him disarms even death itself.
—The starting transport of new-quick'ning life
Gives just such hopes, and pleasures grow again
With looking on him—Let me look my last—

But is a look enough for parting love!
Sure I may take a kiss—Where am I going!
Help, help me, Villeroy!—Mountains and seas
Divide your love, never to meet my shame.

[Throws herself upon the floor; after a short pause, she raises herself upon her elbow.]

What will this battle of the brain do with me!
This little ball, this ravag'd province, long
Cannot maintain—The globe of earth wants room
And food for such a war—I find I'm going—
Famine, plagues, and flames,
Wide waste and desolation, do your work
Upon the world, and then devour yourselves.
—The scene shifts fast—[She rises.]—and now 'tis
better with me;
Conflicting passions have at last unhing'd
The great machine! the soul itself seems chang'd!
Oh, 'tis a happy revolution here!

[Sinks into a chair.]

What noise was that! A knocking at the gate!
It may be Villeroy—No matter who.

Bir. Come, Isabella, come—

Isa. Hark! I'm call'd!

Bir. You stay too long from me.

Isa. A man's voice! in my bed! How came he there?

Nothing but villainy in this bad world: [Rises,
Here's physick for your fever.

[Draws a dagger, and goes backward to the couch,
If husbands go to heav'n,
Where do they go that send 'em?—This to try—

[Just going to stab him, he rises, she knows him,
and shrieks.]

What do I see!

Bir. Isabella, arm'd!

Isa. Against my husband's life!

Bir. Thou didst not think it.

Isa. Madness has brought me to the gates of hell,
And there has left me.

Bir. Why dost thou fly me so?

Isa. I cannot bear his sight; distraction, come,
Possess me all, and take me to thyself!
Shake off thy chains, and hasten to my aid—
Thou art my only cure— [Running out]

Bir. Poor Isabella, she's not in a condition
To give me any comfort, if she could:
Lost to herself—as quickly I shall be
To all the world—Horrors come fast around me;
My mind is overcast—the gathering clouds
Darken the prospect—I approach the brink,
And soon must leap the precipice! Oh, Heav'n!
While yet my senses are my own, thus kneeling,
Let me implore thy mercies on my wife:
Release her from her pangs; and if my reason,
Overwhelm'd with miseries, sink before the tempest,
Pardon those crimes despair may bring upon me.

[Rises.]

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Sir, there's somebody at the door must needs with you; he won't tell his name.

Bir. I come to him.

[Exit Nurse.]

'Tis Belford, I suppose; he little knows
Of what has happen'd here; I wanted him,
Must employ his friendship, and then— [Exit]

SCENE, the Street.

Enter Carlos, with three Russians.

Car. A younger brother! I was one too long,
Not to prevent my being so again.
We must be sudden. Younger brothers are
But lawful bastards of another name,
Thrust out of their nobility of birth
And family, and taint'd into trades.
Shall I be one of them—Bow, and retire;

To make more room for the unwieldy heir
To play the fool in! No—
But how shall I prevent it?—Biron comes
To take possession of my father's love—
Would that were all; there is a birth-right too
That he will seize. Besides, if Biron lives,
He will unfold some practices, which I
Cannot well answer—therefore he shall die;
This night must be dispos'd of: I have means
That will not fail my purpose. Here he comes.

Enter Biron.

Bir. Ha! am I beset? I live but to revenge me.

[They surround him, fighting; Villeroi enters with two servants; they rescue him; Carlos and his party fly.]

Vil. How are you, Sir? Mortally hurt, I fear.
Take care, and lead him in.

Bir. I thank you for the goodness, Sir; tho' 'tis
Bestow'd upon a very wretch; and death,
Tho' from a villain's hand, had been to me
An act of kindness, and the height of mercy—
But I thank you, Sir. [He is led in.]

SCENE, the Inside of the House.

Enter Isabella.

Isa. Murder my husband! Oh! I must not dare
To think of living on; my desperate hand,
In a mad rage, may offer it again!
Stab any where but there. Here's room enough
In my own breast, to act the fury in,
The proper scene of mischief.

[Going to stab herself, Villeroi runs in, and prevents her, by taking the dagger from her.]

Vil. Angels defend and save thee!
Attempt thy precious life!
Lay violent hands upon thy innocent self!
Isa. Swear I am innocent, and I'll believe you.
What would you have with me? Pray let me go.

Vil. Dost thou not know me, love?
'Tis Villeroi, thy husband.

Isa. I have none; no husband— [Weeping.]
Never had but one, and he dy'd at Candy.
Speak, did he not die there?

Vil. He did, my life.

Isa. But swear it, quickly swear,
Biron enters bloody, and leaning upon his sword.
Before that screaming evidence appears,
In bloody proof against me—

[She seeing Biron, swoons in a chair; Villeroi helps her.]

Vil. Help there? Nurse, where are you?
Ha! I am distracted too!

[Going to call for help, sees Biron.]

Biron alive!

Bir. The only wretch on earth that must not live.

Vil. Biron or Villeroi must not, that's decreed.

Bir. You've sav'd me from the hands of murderers:
Would you had not, for life's my greatest plague—
And then, of all the world, you are the man
I would not be oblig'd to—Isabella!

I came to fall before thee: I had dy'd
Happy, not to have found your Villeroi here.

A long farewell, and a last parting kiss. [Kisses her.]

Vil. A kiss! confusion! it must be your last.

[Draws.]

Bir. I know it must—Here I give up that death
You but delay'd: Since what is past has been
The work of fate, thus we must finish it.
Thrust home, be sure. [Faints.]

Vil. Alas! he faints! Some help there.

Bir. 'Tis all in vain, my sorrows soon will end—
Oh, Villeroi! let a dying wretch intreat you,
To take this letter to my father. My Isabella!

Couldst thou but hear me, my last words should
bless thee.

I cannot, tho' in death, bequeath her to thee.

[To Villeroi.]

But could I hope my boy, my little one,
Might find a father in thee—Oh, I faint—
I can no more—Hear me, Heav'n! Oh, support
My wife, my Isabella—bless my child!
And take a poor unhappy— [Dies.]

Vil. He's gone—Let what will be the consequence,
I'll give it him. I have involv'd myself,
And would be clear'd; that must be thought on now.
My care of her is lost in wild amaze. [Going to Isa.]
Good Nurse, take care of her; I'll bring more help.

[Exit]

Isabella comes to herself.

Isa. Where have I been!—Methinks I stand upon
The brink of life, ready to shoot the gulph
That lies between me and the realms of rest:
But still detain'd, I cannot pass the strait;
Deny'd to live, and yet I must not die:
Doom'd to come back, like a complaining ghost,
To my unbury'd body—Here it lies—

[Throws herself by Biron's body.]

My body, soul, and life. A little dust,
To cover our cold limbs in the dark grave—
There, there we shall sleep safe and sound together.

Enter Villeroi with Servants.

Vil. Poor wretch; upon the ground! She's not
herself:

Remove her from the body.

[Servants going to raise her.]

Isa. Never, never—
You have divorc'd us once, but shall no more—
Help, help me, Biron?—Ha!—bloody and dead!
Oh, murder! murder! You have done this deed—
Vengeance and murder! bury us together—
Do any thing but part us.

Vil. Gently, gently raise her.
She must be forc'd away.

[She drags the body after her; they get her into their arms, and carry her off.]

Isa. Oh, they tear me! Cut off my hands—
Let me leave something with him—
They'll clasp him fast—
Oh, cruel, cruel men!
This you must answer one day.

Vil. Good Nurse, take care of her.

[Nurse follows her.]

Send for all helps: all, all that I am worth,
Shall cheaply buy her peace of mind again.
The storm grows loud— [Knocking at the door.]
I am prepar'd for it. Now let them in.

[To a servant.]

Enter Count Baldwin, Carlos, Belford, Friends,
with Servants.

C. Bald. Oh, do I live to this unhappy day!
Where is my wretched son?

Car. Where is my brother?

[They see him, and gasp about the body.]

Vil. I hope, in heaven.

Car. Canst thou pity him!

With him in heav'n! when thou hast done a deed
That must for ever cut thee from the hopes
Of ever coming there.

Vil. I do not blame you—

You have a brother's right to be concern'd
For his untimely death.

Car. Untimely death, indeed!

Vil. But yet you must not say I was the cause.

Car. Not you the cause! Why, who should murder
We do not ask you to accuse yourself; [der him]
But I must say, that you have murder'd him;

And will say nothing else, till justice draws
Upon our side, at the loud call of blood,
To execute so foul a murderer.

Bel. Poor Biron! Is this thy welcome home!

Fr. Rise, Sir; there is a comfort in revenge,
Which yet is left you. [*To C. Baldwin.*]

Car. Take the body hence. [*Biron carry'd off.*]

C. Bald. What could provoke you?

Vil. Nothing could provoke me
To a base murder, which, I find, you think
Me guilty of. I know my innocence;
My servants too can witness that I drew
My sword in his defence, to rescue him.

Bel. Let the servants be call'd.

Fr. Let's hear what they can say.

Car. What they can say! Why, what should ser-
vants say?

They're his accomplices, his instruments,
And will not charge themselves. If they could do
A murder for his service, they can lye,
Lye nimbly, and swear hard, to bring him off.
—You say you drew your sword in his defence:
Who were his enemies? Did he need defence?
Had he wrong'd any one? Could he have cause
To apprehend a danger, but from you?
And yet you rescu'd him!—No, no, he came
Unseasonably, (that was all his crime)
Unluckily to interrupt your sport:
You were new-marry'd—marry'd to his wife;
And therefore you, and she, and all of you,
(For all of you I must believe concern'd)
Combina'd to murder him out of the way.

Bel. If it be so——

Car. It can be only so.

Fr. Indeed it has a face——

Car. As black as hell.

C. Bald. The law will do me justice: send for
the magistrate.

Car. I'll go myself for him—— [*Exit.*]

Vil. These strong presumptions, I must own, in-
Are violent against me; but I have [*deed,*
A witness, and on this side heav'n too.

——Open that door.

*Door opens, and Pedro is brought forward by Villeroy's
Servants.*

—Here's one can tell you all.

Ped. All, all; save me but from the rack, I'll
confess all.

Vil. You and your accomplices design'd
To murder Biron?—Speak.

Ped. We did.

Vil. Did you engage upon your private wrongs,
Or were employ'd?

Ped. He never did us wrong.

Vil. You were set on then?

Ped. We were set on.

Vil. What do you know of me?

Ped. Nothing, nothing:

You sav'd his life, and have discover'd me.

Vil. He has acquitted me.

If you would be resolv'd of any things
He stands upon his answer.

Bel. Who set you on to act this horrid deed?

C. Bald. I'll know the villain; give me quick
his name,

Or I will tear it from thy bleeding heart.

Ped. I will confess.

C. Bald. Do then.

Ped. It was my master, Carlos, your own son.

C. Bald. Oh, monstrous! monstrous! most un-
natural!

Bel. Did he employ you to murder his own bro-
ther?

Ped. He did; and he was with us when 'twas
done.

C. Bald. If this be true, this horrid, horrid tale,
It is but just upon me: Biron's wrongs
Must be reveng'd; and I the cause of all.

Fr. What will you do with him?

C. Bald. Take him apart——

I know too much.

[*Pedro goes in.*]

Vil. I had forgot—Your wretched, dying son,
Gave me this letter for you. [*Gives it to Baldwin.*]
I dare deliver it. If it speaks of me,
I pray to have it read.

C. Bald. You know the hand.

Bel. I know 'tis Biron's hand.

C. Bald. Pray read it. [*Belford reads the letter.*]

"S I R,

"I find I am come only to lay my death at your
door. I am now going out of the world; but can-
not forgive you, nor my brother Carlos, for not hin-
dering my poor wife, Isabella, from marrying with
Villeroy; when you both knew, from so many let-
ters, that I was alive.—— "BIRON."

Vil. How!—Did you know it then?

C. Bald. Amazement all!

Enter Carlos, with Officers.

—Oh, Carlos! are you come? Your brother here,
Here, in a wretched letter, lays his death
To you and me—Have you done any thing
To hasten his sad end?

Car. Bless me, Sir, I do any thing! Who, I?

C. Bald. He talks of letters that were sent to us.
I never heard of any—Did you know
He was alive?

Car. Alive! Heav'n knows, not I.

C. Bald. Had you no news of him, from a report
Or letter, never?

Car. Never, never, I.

Bel. That's strange, indeed—I know he often writ
To lay before you the condition. [*To C. Baldwin.*]
Of his hard slavery: and more, I know,
That he had several answers to his letters. —
He said, they came from you; you are his brother.

Car. Never from me.

Bel. That will appear.

The letters, I believe, are still about him;
For some of 'em I saw but yesterday.

C. Bald. What did those answers say?

Bel. I cannot speak to the particulars;
But I remember well, the sum of 'em
Was much the same; and all agreed,
That there was nothing to be hop'd from you;
That 'twas your barbarous resolution
To let him perish there.——

C. Bald. Oh, Carlos! Carlos! hadst thou been
a brother——

Car. This is a plot upon me. I never knew
He was in slavery, or was alive,
Or heard of him, before this fatal hour.

Bel. There, Sir, I must confront you.

He sent you a letter, to my knowledge, last night;
And you sent him word you would come to him—
I fear you came too soon.

C. Bald. 'Tis all too plain.——

Bring out that wretch before him. [*Pedro produced.*]

Car. Ha! Pedro there!—Then I am caught, in-
Bel. You start at sight of him; [*deed!*

He has confess'd the bloody deed.

Car. Well then, he has confess'd,

And I must answer it.

Bel. Is there no more?

Car. Why!—what would you have more? I know
And I expect it. [*the worst,*

C. Bald. Why hast thou done all this?

Car. Why, that which damns most men, has ruin'd
The making of my fortune. Biron stood [me;
Between me and your favour: while he liv'd,
I had not that; hardly was thought a son,
And not at all akin to your estate.
I could not bear a younger brother's lot,
To live depending upon courtesy——
Had you provided for me like a father,
I had been still a brother.

C. Bald. 'Tis too true:

I never lov'd thee, as I should have done:
It was my sin, and I am punish'd for't.
Oh! never may distinction rise again
In families: let parents be the same
To all their children; common in their care,
And in their love of 'em—I am unhappy,
For loving one too well.

Vil. You knew your brother liv'd; why did you
Sach pains to marry me to Isabella? [take

Car. I had my reasons for't——

Vil. More than I thought you had.

Car. But one was this——

I knew my brother lov'd his wife so well,
That if ever he should come home again,
He could not long out-live the loss of her.

Bel. If you rely'd on that, why did you kill him?

Car. To make all sure. Now, you are answer'd
all.

Where must I go? I am tir'd of your questions.

C. Bald. I leave the judge to tell thee what thou
A father cannot find a name for thee. [art;

But parricide is highest treason, sure,
To sacred nature's law; and must be so,
So sentenc'd in thy crimes. Take him away——
The violent remedy is found at last,
That drives thee out, thou poison of my blood,
Infected long, and only foul in thee.

[Carlos led off.

Grant me, sweet Heav'n, thy patience to go thro'
The torment of my cure——Here, here begins
The operation——Alas! she's mad.

*Enter Isabella distracted, held by her Women; her
Hair dishevell'd; her little Son running in before,
being afraid of her.*

Vil. My Isabella! poor, unhappy wretch!
What can I say to her?

Isa. Nothing, nothing; 'tis a babbling world——
I'd hear no more on't. When does the court sit?——
You look like one of the pale judges here;
Minos, or Radamanth, or Æacus——
I have heard of you.

I have a cause to try, an honest one;
Will you not hear it? Then I must appeal
To the bright throne——Call down the heav'nly pow-
To witness how you use me. [erst

C. Bald. Pray give her way; she'll hurt nobody.

Isa. What have you done with him? He was here
but now;

I saw him here. Oh, Biron, Biron! where,
Where have they hid thee from me? He is gone——
But here's a little flaming cherubim——

Child. Oh, save me, save me!

[Running to C. Baldwin.

Isa. The Mercury of Heav'n, with silver wings,
Impt for the flight, to overtake his ghost,
And bring him back again.

Child. I fear she'll kill me.

C. Bald. She will not hurt thee.

[She flings away.

Isa. Will nothing do? I did not hope to find
Justice on earth; 'tis not in Heav'n neither.
Biron has watch'd his opportunity——

Softly; he steals it from the sleeping gods,
And sends it thus——

[Stabs herself.

Now, now I laugh at you, defy you all,
You tyrant murderers.

Vil. Call, call for help——Oh, Heav'n! this was
too much.

C. Bald. Oh, thou most injur'd innocence! Yet
Live but to witness for me to the world, [live,
How much I do repent me of the wrongs,
Th' unnatural wrongs, which I have heap'd on thee,
And have pull'd down this judgment on us all.

Vil. Oh, speak, speak but a word of comfort to
me.

C. Bald. If the most tender father's care and love
Of thee, and thy poor child, can make amends——
Oh, yet look up and live.

Isa. Where is that little wretch?

[They raise her.

I die in peace, to leave him to your care.

I have a wretched mother's legacy,
A dying kiss——pray let me give it him,
My blessing; that, that's all I have to leave thee.

Oh, may thy father's virtues live in thee,
And all his wrongs be buried in my grave! [Dies.

Vil. She's gone, and all my joys of life with her.

C. Bald. Poor, wretched orphan, of most wretch-
The very rocks would melt, [ed parents!
Softens their nature, sure, to foster thee.

I find it by myself: my flinty heart,
That barren rock, on which thy father starv'd,
Opens its springs of nourishment to thee;
There's not a vein but shall run milk for thee.

Oh, had I pardon'd my poor Biron's fault,
His first, his only fault——this had not been.

To erring youth there's some compassion due;
But while with rigour you their crimes pursue, }
What's their misfortune, is a crime for you.

Hence learn, offending children to forgive:
Leave punishment to Heav'n——'tis Heav'n's pre-
gative.

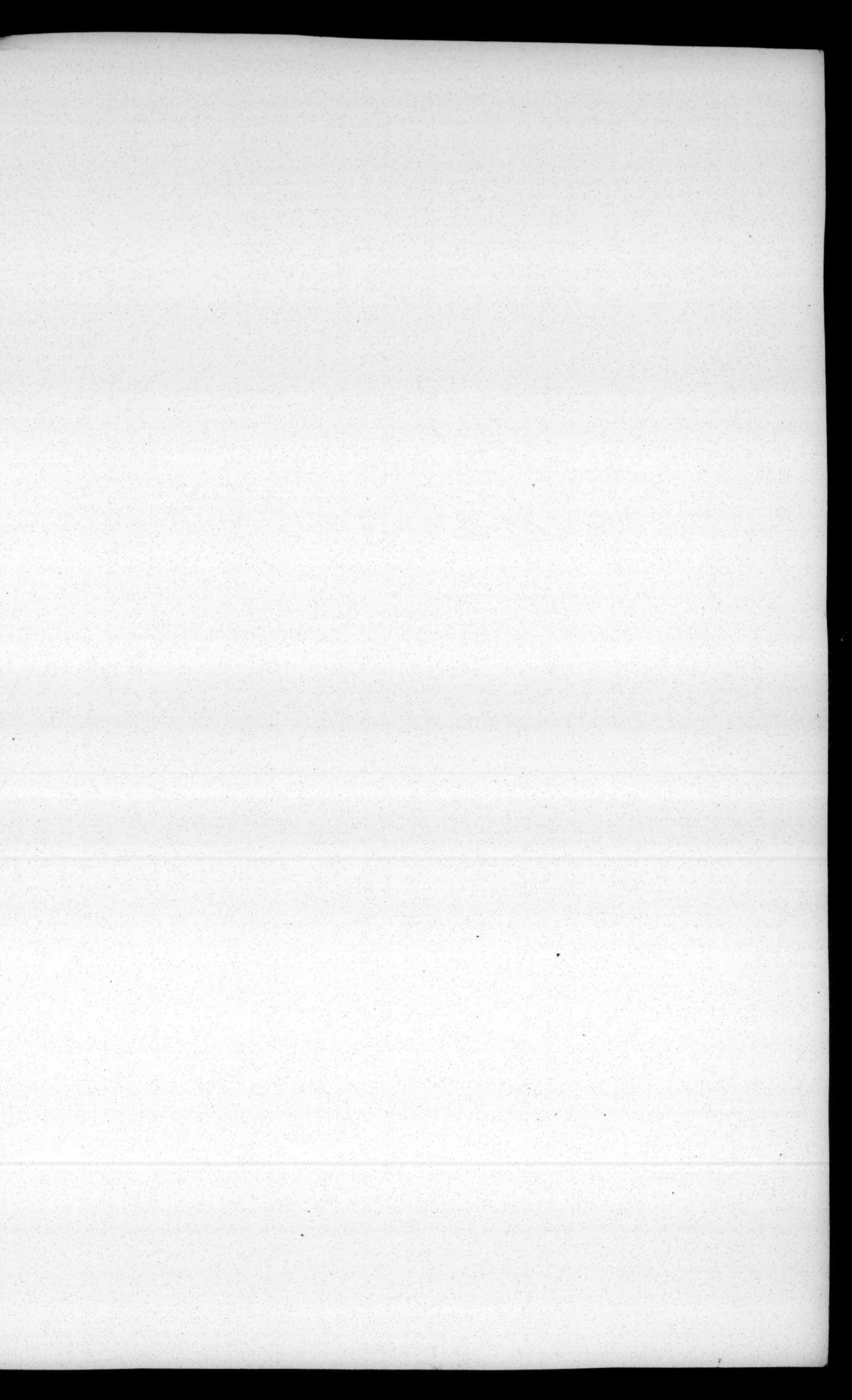


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